

TANTALISING TOM GOES ON A SPREE

By Argus

Wycombe Wanderers 6;

St. Albans City 0.

A CULTURED, deceptively nonchalant first half hat-trick display by Tommy Holmes, full of ferocious headers and delicate ball control, sent St. Albans defenders into a six-minute trance at Loakes Park on Saturday. When they blinked their eyes open Holmes was three goals better off and the game was all over.

Second half goals from Michael Rockell, Jack Tomlin and Paul Bates were a mere formality. An inept City side—which has now conceded 12 goals against Wycombe this season—looked pitifully inadequate against a Wanderers side in a mean mood.

Even allowing for the fact that both Paul Bates and Len Worley were below their peak form, this was the best allround Wycombe performance this season and a heady tonic in time for the cup speculations.

Weakened St. Albans—two of their key players were playing for Herts—were lucky to escape a double-figure thrashing. The first half was particularly one-sided and several goals should have been in the bag before Holmes began his spree, in the 24th minute.

OLD DASH

Holmes apart, the liveliest Wycombe raider was right-winger Michael Rockell, who showed his old dash and opportunism. The subtle soccer brain of Jack Tomlin was also behind many of the virtually non-stop Wycombe attacks.

Most applauded Wycombe defender was left-back Dennis Atkins, playing against his old club. He clearly had the toughest assignment—against teenage whippet Herbie Smith, the best St. Albans forward.

Atkins always kept a cool head while John Fisher, determined to prove he is the best pivot on Wycombe's books, blockaded the centre to St. Albans Number 9, Tomlinson, who had a hapless game.

Wycombe's forwards hovered around the City goal like vultures—but their claws needed sharpening early on. As City defenders pelted the ball behind for corners their goal had fantastic escapes. Rockell and Worley completely deceived goalkeeper Locker for Bates to miss a sitter.

HOLMES STRIKES

Then the remarkable Mr. Holmes took a hand with some of the niftiest headwork seen at Loakes Park since the Dennis Edwards days. After flashing the ball against the St. Alban's crossbar with his best effort—in the 21st minute—he headed in John Beck's centre three minutes later. Two more goals in two minutes—the first another classical "bonce" effort, the second the perfect ending to a Len Worley dribble—left St. Albans devastated.

Although City attacked briskly at the beginning of the second half Wycombe had plenty in hand. When Len Worley hit the angle of the City woodwork with a great drive, Rockell streaked in to score number four. Tomlin, receiving from Rockell via Dave Worley in the goalmouth, and Bates—with a ground shot he controlled delightfully, completed the scoring.

When they were five goals down City lost left-winger Ken Evans with a badly cut face but by then they were a demoralised side.